

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

I want to start by extending my best wishes for a good rest of the year and praying for strength as we all continue to navigate this pandemic together.

My name is Julieta Orozco Valdovinos, I am a Bridgeport resident, my husband and I have raised our five kids in Bridgeport CT. All five of my children attend (ed) traditional and public charter schools. We are part of the Achievement First family; my two youngest are currently at Achievement First Bridgeport Elementary. My oldest daughter graduated from Achievement First Amistad High School, she is now a college graduate with a degree in political science and psychology from UConn. My daughter Mari is in her fourth semester at Wester pursuing a degree in Art.

I consider myself and my family hardworking and determined- we come from people that see a challenge- but only stay in front of it long enough to solve it. I am confident in the opportunities before my children to succeed. Our family values coupled with the education they received at Achievement First- have positioned them to do so correctly.

My message is for you all to join me in the fight to fight education equality. **It is an absolute shame that children are not equally funded. Why is anyone ok with a system that favors one student versus another. I feel it is an absolute injustice at the fact that I pay some of the highest taxes and yet live in a town with one of the largest educational gaps. We are supporting a system that perpetuates poverty ensuring we lack options.**

The Governor has proposed an increase to our charters and there are many bills before you demanding education equity. There is no time like the present to right the wrongs of how our state has supported an unequal educational system that hurts kids like my own who live in Bridgeport.

The pandemic hit us and most of us had our lives turned upside down and we continue to work to build some sort of balance. I want to shout out the team at AF Elementary for their

unparalleled commitment to keep our kids engaged and focused under a completely different learning environment.

In the spirit of moving forward and creating sustainable long term change for children who have carried the weight of the consequences of a state that has supported an unequal, unjust system of funding and educating its children. Please support the bills before this committee that demand change for all children. Also support the expansion and opening of quality schools like Stamford Excellence and Danbury Prospect. These schools will serve minority families just like mine.

Please reach out to me with any questions, I look forward to hearing from you and having you join our Families and the CTCSA community in upcoming meetings.

I stand in support of SB 948, SB 949 and SB 886.

Best regards,

Julieta Orozco Valdovinos and Family

